

*REMARKS*

In response to the Office Action mailed October 7, 2003, Applicants amend their application and request reconsideration. No claims are added or cancelled so that claims 1-20 remain pending.

There is no prior art rejection of any claim. There was no indication that any claim was allowable. However, the amendments that are made here are made after diligent review of the patent application and in an attempt to place the application in form for allowance. If the Examiner chooses to make a prior art rejection for the first time in the next communication, it would be improper to make that rejection a final rejection since the claims presented by way of Preliminary Amendment were clear and could be examined.

The Office Action was devoted to alleged informalities. According to one of those informalities, the patent application was improper because the claims did not begin on a separate page. In fact, a Notice concerning this defect was mailed on March 6, 2002 and responded to on March 14, 2002. These documents are papers 4 and 5 in the file. Paper 5 is a replacement patent application in which the claims begin on a separate page. In other words, the informality was corrected more than 20 months ago.

With regard to the specification, changes have been made at every point identified by the Examiner as allegedly informal or misdescriptive, with the following exceptions. The word "sizes" could not be found at page 9 in line 19 or any other line. The use of "Owing" at page 13, line 8 may not be grammar that is commonly encountered, but the usage of the word is entirely correct. No change is made. The demand that additional words be supplied at page 8, line 16 with regard to the drawing figures is inconsistent with usual practice of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The undersigned has never seen such a statement in more than 20 years of reading U.S. patents and it is not necessary to include such a statement. Further, because all of the elements that are identical are given the same reference numbers in all figures, it is not necessary to identify each element by reference number in Figures 3, 5, and 6. Those figures are additional views of other figures in which the identical reference numbers are shown and described.

With regard to the drawing figures, prior art labels are added to Figures 7-11, the missing reference numbers cited for Figures 8 and 10 are added, although not needed, and the cross-hatching in Figures 2, 3, 5, 6, and 11 is corrected. No change is needed in any cross-hatching in Figures 8 and 10 and in other figures that show corresponding elements. As explained in the patent application at page 10, lines 17-22, element 108 has lines drawn on it, not to indicate sectioning, but to show that particular element. A similar description appears

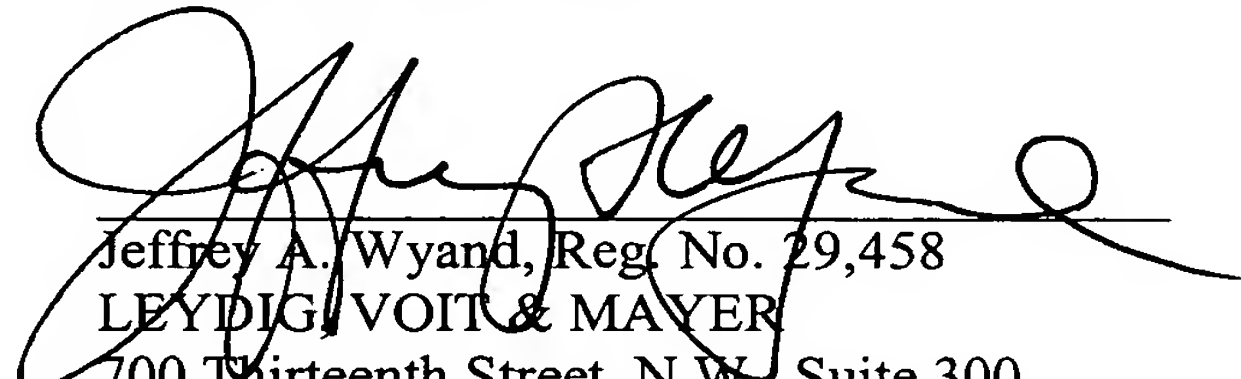
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Application No. 10/067,286

for the prior art figures at page 3 in the paragraph beginning in line 16 of the patent application.

With regard to the claims, a detailed review has been made of all the claims. The claims have been clarified both by incorporating the Examiner's suggestions and again by considering the claims in detail. The form of the claims is improved and some additional errors, previously overlooked and not mentioned in the Office Action, are corrected.

Since the extensive amendment places the application in form for allowance, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAW:ves